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Canadian ART

Vol. I

JUNE - JULY, 1944

No. 5

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Water colour from the Royal Canadian Air Force Exhibition. Purchased by G/C K. B. Conn.

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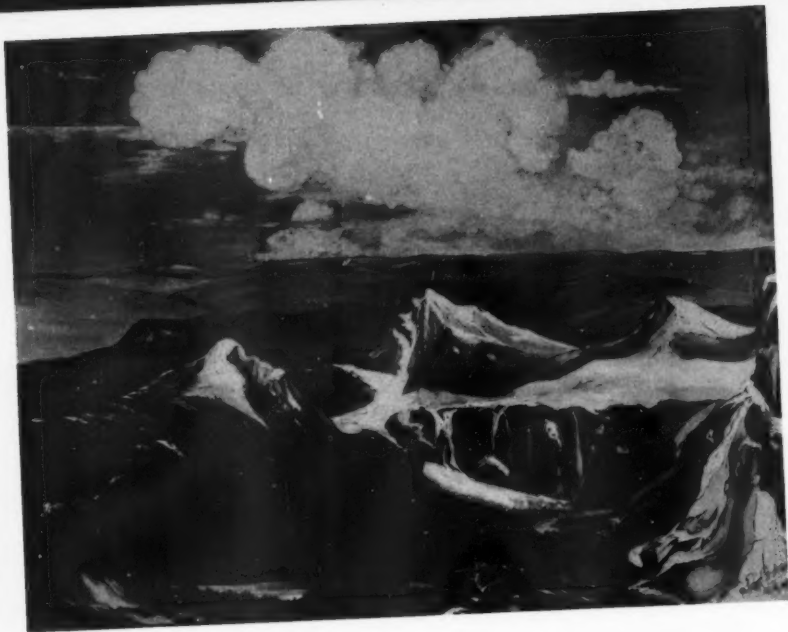
PUBLISHED EVERY SECOND MONTH FROM OCTOBER TO JUNE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A BOARD REPRESENTING THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA, THE ART ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL, THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY, THE MARITIME ART ASSOCIATION, THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS.

Formerly Maritime Art; founded in 1940 by the Maritime Art Association

Statutory Postal rights granted by the District Director of Postal Services, Ottawa. 25c per copy. Yearly subscription in Canada, \$1; abroad, \$1.25.

Articles and illustrations suitable for publication are desired, but contributors are advised to consult the Editor before submitting material. Advertising rates upon application.

EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: BOX 384, OTTAWA, CANADA



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Navigation Flight
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F/O E. W. WHITTE
Self Portrait
Oil

ONALD
AM
n Flight
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ed by
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Sgt. P.
COWLEY-BROWN
Ready for Take-off
Prize for Best Picture
in the Exhibition



ART IN THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE

BY F/O CHARLES GOLDHAMER

SOMETHING new under the sun! The R.C.A.F. is sponsoring the practice and enjoyment of drawing, painting and the crafts for men and women in the service. Due to the foresight and energy of a number of officers at Air Force Headquarters, and after considerable difficulties had been overcome, the R.C.A.F. was able nine months ago to appoint an administrative artist. The writer was fortunate enough to be selected for this position.

One of the many hardships of service life is the lack of aesthetic pleasures. Much has been done in the past to facilitate sports, but those who wished to carry on an art hobby, and who hungered for some form of creative activity, received little official encouragement until recently. Now art groups are being organized for such people. Near large centres the task is fairly simple, but in isolated districts such as Labrador, New-

foundland and some sections of the west coast, it is more of a problem. It is also more of a necessity due to the lonely environment.

The general idea works like this. As administrative artist, I fly to an isolated station, make my presence known, and call a meeting of interested personnel. An organization is set up, with president, secretary and treasurer, and as a result the art group becomes a recognized station activity. At the organization meeting, I outline the suggested activities of the group, demonstrate art processes, and discuss the best methods of carrying on. Quarters are arranged for, not always an easy matter, though in some cases very fine studios have been found. As a matter of fact, in one large station at the top of Newfoundland the studio accommodation is as grand as can be found in any city art school.

In travelling about, I carry with me a

WHITIN
trait



LAC M. REINBLATT
Cpl. Seagar (Rigger)
 1st Prize for Oils.
 Purchased by the
 R.C.A.F.

collection of thirty-two original water colours by members of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. This exhibition, which is one of those arranged and sponsored by the National War Services Committee of the Y.M. C.A., is shown at the station during my visit. It helps to stimulate interest and argument, and serves as a background for the project.

Usually thirty or forty persons are present at the initial meeting, but as soon as the group begins to work, this number increases considerably. A list of necessary supplies is left with the station authorities, to be purchased out of station funds. A talented or interested N.C.O., airman, or anyone else qualified to teach, is appointed art instructor. At a number of stations across Canada, classes are

now under way and are functioning well.

There seems to be a great and growing interest in art, and this is true of all three services. We can attribute this happy development in the modern world to several causes. For one thing, art galleries today are no longer simply repositories for pictures; they are educational institutions and perform a positive task in popularizing what hangs on their walls. Secondly, the reproductions which are now available at such low prices have greatly widened the appreciation of the arts. Above all, our thanks are due to modern art education. The art school of today no longer presents merely a collection of plaster casts, but is definitely one of the places where potent and effective work of our time

is being done. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that many important figures in this global war are spare-time painters. Winston Churchill carries his sketch box wherever he goes, and many more leaders and prominent personalities are amateur artists. Air Vice Marshal Vernon Heakes, Officer Commanding No. 1 Group, Newfoundland, is an off-duty painter, and is represented in the present R.C.A.F. exhibition by two oils. It is interesting to note that there are over 450 amateur and professional artists at present in the R.C.A.F.

In Ottawa on the evening of April 28th, 1944, the R.C.A.F. opened its first exhibition of paintings and drawings from Canada and overseas. The National Gallery of Canada was crowded to capacity with guests, including representatives of the services, the government and the public, and many distinguished officials of foreign governments in Ottawa. The Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, British High Commissioner to Canada, opened the exhibition, and was introduced by Air Vice Marshal Sully.

The exhibition is in many respects full of promise. As a direct result, talent has been discovered which, in the ordinary run of events, might have gone unnoticed. This has enabled the his-

torical section of the R.C.A.F. to add to its list a number of artists who may be called upon to contribute their efforts for war records. Sgt. Patrick Cowley-Brown, winner of the prize for the best picture in the show, has already been commissioned as an official R.C.A.F. war artist. Two others discovered are fighter pilots overseas, and arrangements have been made for them to do war record work between their tours of operations.

A mixed jury of civilian judges and Air Force personnel* selected the exhibition from over seven hundred entries. *Ready for the Take Off* by Cowley-Brown, adjudged the best picture in the exhibition, is a scholarly picture, authentic and well painted. Another entry, which attracted much attention, was a vigorous gouache, *Going Up for Gun-nery Exercise*, by A.C.1 A. Bayefsky. As can be seen from the reproduction on the cover of this issue of *Canadian Art*, it is a powerful design, painted with great imagination and a strong suggestion of form, which gives it a feeling of movement and depth.

Cpl. Seagar (Rigger) by LAC Reinblatt is an appealing portrait, half whimsical, half serious, with a rhythmic repe-

*For list and photograph of jury, see April-May issue of "Canadian Art," page 156.



F/L GEORGE
BROOMFIELD
Take-off for Essen
3rd Prize for Oils.
Purchased by the
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tition of angular forms binding it into a unified design. *Navigation Flt.* by LAC Graham is a typical airman's view of the world. In it the artist develops an impressive pattern from the over-all forms of sky and earth. A number of other effective works from the exhibition are shown among our illustrations.

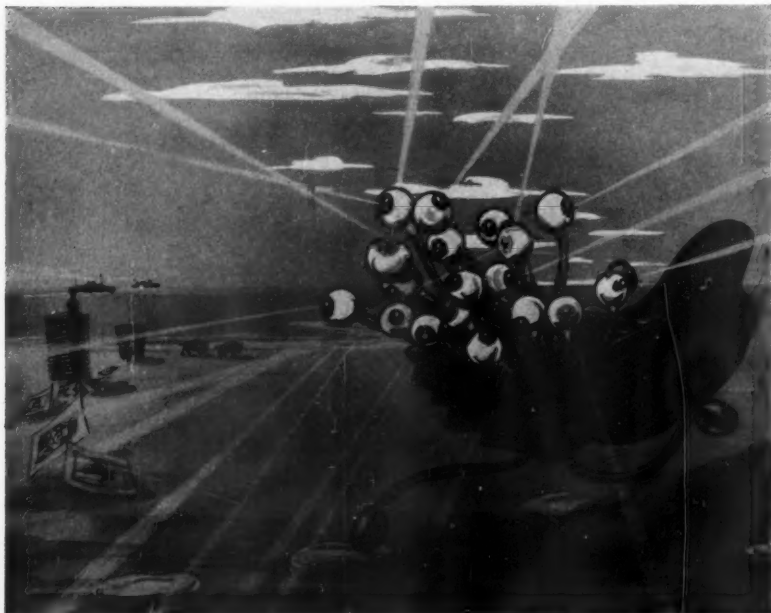
When due allowance has been made for the fact that the exhibition represents a cross section of all the artists in the Air Force, most observers will probably grant that it attains a creditable level. A showing of this kind can hardly be expected to be uniformly excellent. There is some dull work in it, but there are also quite a number of pictures of merit. Indeed there is some work that could hold its own in any professional show. A number of artists have departed from the traditional use of their mediums, depending on bold contrasts and emphatic delineation of form to secure effects. One feels that the R.C.A.F. is doing its share in developing and adding to the culture of the Dominion in the field of painting.

At the date of writing, fourteen pictures, or more than 10 per cent of the exhibition, have been sold. Eight of the purchases were made by the R.C.A.F. to be distributed to various Air Force stations as a tribute to their efforts in

the last Victory Loan campaign. Four other works were purchased by Air Force officers for their private collections, and two by civilians.

After leaving Ottawa, the exhibition will be shown in the T. Eaton Galleries in Toronto, at the Art Association of Montreal, and in the larger cities of the west. Later a selection of forty of the most characteristic works will be sent on tour to Air Force stations and training schools throughout the country.

Mr. Malcolm MacDonald ably commented on the exhibition in his opening speech when he said, "This exhibition confirms one's faith in human nature. Even in the stress and destruction of war, men keep their ideals, and their urge to create beauty continues producing its flowers. It is thrilling to discover how many members of the R.C.A.F. when they put down their pens as administrative officers, their spanners as members of ground crews, or their weapons as fighter and bomber crews, pick up their brushes as artists." Mr. MacDonald concluded his address with these prophetic words: "When the members of the R.C.A.F. have finished playing their superb part in destroying the enemy, many of them will play an equally important part in helping to make a more beautiful world."



LAC S. A. CALLAGHAN
News Camera
Water Colour
Purchased by
W. B. Herbert

RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH THE ARTS

BY LAWREN HARRIS

President, Federation of Canadian Artists

THE greatest need in Canada is for a unity of spirit over and above the great diversity of its life.

Our people are divided by racial, religious, political, and economic differences; by class interests and sectional prejudices. There are three things which transcend these differences—the scientific spirit, the religious spirit (as distinct from any one religion), and the arts. It would seem that the arts, because at their best they include the religious spirit, and because they touch the life of every individual in some degree, can be most effective in creating Canadian unity.

Serge Koussevitsky recently wrote that "In our time all problems in every sphere of life are open and require new solutions. The state of the world demands a readjustment of the cultural values. The principal question is how best to bring the arts closer to the people. The artificial barriers between the initiated and the uninitiated must be broken down."

How can our creative workers in all the arts, and all our interested laymen, assist in breaking down these barriers and in bringing about Canadian unity? Perhaps we will find the answer in terms of creative activity in the arts. All creative activity is an interplay between complementaries or apparent opposites. Among such complementaries are the objective and subjective, environment and response to its impact, the temporal and the enduring, the topical or local and the universal, the emotion and the intellect, the material and the spiritual,—and so on.

Likewise in a community, or in a country, or in humanity, this creative

and cultural interplay must be at work or divisions and dissensions will occur and eventually cause separation and disintegration. As a people we either move on a creative momentum towards harmony and unity or we lose spiritual vitality and identity. Put in different words, we may say that good will in a people can only be engendered by the creative interplay at work in a community or country, or in humanity. That is a truth of supreme importance.

What then are some of the factors which constitute this creative interplay in a people and which can give it values over and above its many differences; can, indeed, even transform its life?

One interplay is between the artist and layman in every centre and region. These two, the artist and as large a number of laymen as possible, should be drawn into one functioning organization so that laymen participate in the creative life of the artist and take a part in the creative problems of the community. This is one of the functions of the Federation of Canadian Artists.

It is important for many reasons. It creates an enthusiastic, evocative audience without which the arts cannot become part of the life of a people and make them aware that they themselves are an inseparable part of a creative culture, a dynamic identity. To quote Serge Koussevitsky again, "This is more important than the education of the professionals, for unless professional accomplishment is a natural product of the people's culture it inevitably becomes a lifeless academism."

We have, on the one hand, many professional art societies which necessarily specialize in some phase of art or serve

a particular region and tend to become self-enclosed. On the other hand is the Canadian public. It is essential to have an active and unifying agent between these two, functioning right across Canada, if there is to be a flow in the creative life. This will greatly benefit the professional art societies, the artists, and the Canadian public.

Another interplay is that between the different regions of the country wherein they each find conviction and are helped to shape their own character. Another is between the regions and our few large and high-tension art centres, whereby the regions are quickened into new life and the art centres are nourished and mellowed by co-operation. Another is between the different provincial educational systems and the national culture. And that leads me to a plan which would make the creative interplay of the arts and the life of our people widespread and fruitful. This plan, improved by further consideration, will be submitted to the Reconstruction Committee of the Federal Government by the national bodies in Canada concerned with all the arts.

NATIONAL ART CENTRE PLAN

That 25 major cultural community centres be built in Canadian cities; 5 in the Maritime Provinces, 4 in the province of Quebec, 7 in Ontario, 6 in the Prairie Provinces, 3 in British Columbia.

Each building would include an auditorium with a seating capacity of 800 or more, its size to be determined by the size of the city. This auditorium to be designed and equipped for drama, ballet, orchestra and concerts of all kinds, films, lectures and meetings. In addition the centre would contain an art gallery for all kinds of exhibitions, including crafts, workshops for crafts, lithography, silk screen printing, mural painting, etc., rooms for art classes and children's work, and space for storage, packing, assembly, and administrative purposes. There would also be a library, which would be the city library if practicable.

These centres would serve the cul-

tural life of the community in all ways not already taken care of by its regular educational system. Each centre would be a distributing point for its region, extending its facilities to factories, clubs, schools, and outlying rural districts.

The land for each centre to be given by the municipality, which will also assume responsibility for administration and maintenance of the centre. Each centre should be autonomous and would cost from \$250,000 up. Total cost of the 25 major centres would be \$6,250,000.

In addition to the major centres, there should be 50 minor ones offering similar facilities on a smaller scale. These minor centres to cost from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each, or a total of from \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000. This means a total of \$10,000,000 for both major and minor centres.

There should be one supervising architect for all 75 buildings. He would work in collaboration with local architects.

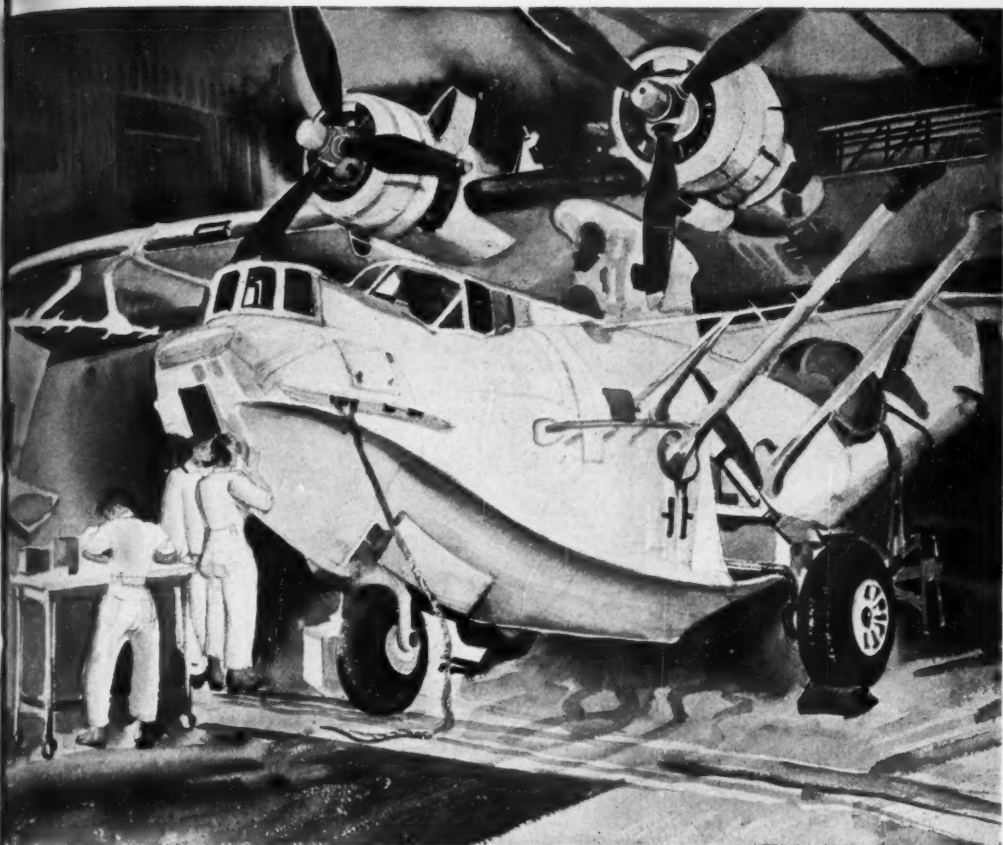
NATIONAL SERVICES

There are at present three national services which should function through all of these cultural centres.

1. *The National Gallery.* A large extension of its services would be necessary to assemble hundreds of exhibitions of many kinds and to schedule these through all the centres. This will necessitate an increase in its staff, including field workers and lecturers, and a large increase in its yearly grant. Also a new National Gallery building, with adequate storage, assembly and shipping space, repair workshop, offices and galleries, will be necessary to carry out such an enlarged program. The handicrafts will require central offices and space for storage, assembly, and shipping. This should be provided for in the new National Gallery building.

2. *The National Film Board.* The Film Board would require a small room in each centre for equipment, repairs, etc. We understand that the Board as at present organized can take care of increased national service. In the distri-

Continued on page 224



PETER HAWORTH. *Repair Job, Canso, P.B.Y.* Water Colour.

WATER COLOUR ANNUAL

BY NORTHROP FRYE

A WATER COLOUR show is usually worth looking at in itself, and is even more so when it appears along with another show in oils. The exhibition of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour at the Art Gallery of Toronto was accompanied by the Canadian Group of Painters (reviewed in the last issue of *Canadian Art* by Mrs. Housser), and the conjunction of the two illustrated not only the range and variety of Canadian water colour, but its relation to Canadian painting as a whole.

It seems as though in oil painting

there is a constant and inevitable tendency to become conventionalized and academic. The academies themselves, with their endless repetition of Dutch and Victorian techniques, are the fossils which prove that this was true in vanished ages; but precisely similar trends are apparent even in the best current painting. When Canadian pictures are glibly spoken of as "posterish", what is meant is that there is in Canadian landscape, with its solidly massed clouds and its opulent barbaric colouring, or in its heavy lugubrious portraits, a latent



JULIA CRAWFORD. *Work and Relaxation (Our Wartime Square)*. Water Colour.

tendency to relapse into ready-made formulas, either in design or in colour. When we see some of our best painters experimenting with abstraction, we see that they have recognized this tendency and are deliberately counteracting it. And it is here that water colour painting takes on a peculiar significance, for I think a strong case could be made out for saying that one of the chief functions of water colour is to keep painters interested in untried possibilities, whether in subject matter or in technique.

There are many reasons why this is so. Water colour by its very nature is closer to the cultivated amateur than oil. And the cultivated amateur is not only the backbone of intelligent public appreciation of painting, he is not only a frequently interesting contributor to it himself (at least one amateur has contributed two delightful little studies to this exhibition), but he stands for a

spirit no professional can do without: the spirit of painting for fun. Oil painting tends by itself to become exhibition painting, which in Canada means that it tends to centre in Toronto and Montreal. There is more opportunity for decentralization in water colour, and one is not surprised to find Maritimers and Westerners making up so large a share of the contributions to this exhibition. Often, too, a painter by the very fact that he is apt to take his water colour less seriously than his big oils, will let himself go more, achieve more lightness and humour, get more space and air and light into his picture, sacrifice detail to carry through his rhythm, and in general preserve the vitality of the original sketch and avoid the self-conscious solemnity which is so often the mood of the big exhibition picture.

It is also the water colour artist who is likely to be more attracted in the first

place to the sort of subject that presents a challenge to the painter's power of organizing form. Even before the war, the grotesque twisted shapes of buoys, anchors, beached boats, fish nets and lobster-pots were beginning to creep into Canadian painting; since the war, the immense pictorial possibilities of factories and war plants have reinforced them, and a whole new world of caulking, rivetting, welding, marching men working in a confusion of smoke and noise and gantries and assembly belts and derricks and cartridge case plants has come into our pictures, one hopes for good.

This is in all our painting, but water colour has probably taken the lead in exploring it, a fact which will be even more obvious when the war records now being done by Canadian artists in the armed forces are added to those on the home front. And the fact that such painting involves so many studies of people may eventually begin to wake up our portraiture. Perhaps, after so many sidelong glances at people engaged in their work, the Canadian painter may

get in less of a panic at the sight of a human face, and less inclined to give it the blank unfocused stare of something out of the Douanier Rousseau.

The most obvious reason why water colour is so continuously a fertilizing influence in painting is its great variety of techniques. In this show there is every kind of medium, from Fritz Brandtner's flaming dyes to Jack Humphrey's carefully balanced tempera, and every method of putting it on from Milne's impressionistic wash on wet paper to the heavy opacity of Peter Haworth. All this tends in exactly the opposite direction from the conventionality noted above, and proves by illustration that painting may be as solid as the Florentines or as flat as the Chinese; that it may be all perspective or have no perspective; that it may catch the sweep of rain across a lake or the receding depths of Western mountains. Its only law is to be as lively and interesting as possible; and such exhibitions as this indicate that painting is in no danger of losing its place as the liveliest and most interesting of Canadian arts.



DAVID MILNE. *Cedar Swamp*. Water Colour.

SCULPTORS' SOCIETY EXHIBITION

BY PAGE TOLES

ELIZABETH WYN WOOD, A.R.C.A. *Munition Worker.*
Plaster for Aluminum. Photo Merrill-Nott Ass.



THE Sculptors' Society of Canada's seventh exhibition, held at the Art Gallery of Toronto from March 18th to April 9th and later transferred to the London Art Museum, showed little of the wartime influence so noticeable in current exhibitions of painting and graphic art. This was perhaps preferable to any marked attempt to force a topical note into the sculptor's medium. Several works, however, did successfully draw inspiration from these war years, as will be evident from some of the titles mentioned below. Wartime conditions probably accounted also for the lack of variety in architectural sculpture which was evident in this show.

The exhibition was a competent and successful one; it was also a quiet one with no outstanding trend. It would have been interesting to see more of the pieces finished in stone or metal, instead of having so many of them in the state of preliminary plaster models. If any generalization can be made, it may be noted that the really fine work ranged in size from the small pottery figure to the portrait head. The few examples of work reaching architectural proportions were disappointing. Florence Wyle's panels, *North Country*, *Rainbow*, and *Farm*, are so simplified as to be largely ineffective.

A number of fine portrait heads were shown, notably a vigorous study of M. Maynard by Byllee Lang, a very sensitive and lovely head, *Bernice*, by Gloria Jefferies, a portrait of Sgt. Ev. Staples by Louise Paul, *Jeune Indienne* by H. McRea Miller, and the charming *Qemfefer with Heddy* by Elizabeth Wyn Wood. *Nancy*, by Eugenia Berlin, makes ingenious use of Nancy's pig tails. A fine head, *Tony*, by Pauline Redsell, suffered as did other works in the exhibition from the finish applied to the plaster.

Among the more decorative works were three small pieces by Jacobine Jones: *Fox*, *Refugees*, and a particularly fine *Mother and Child*. Sheila Wherry contributed a pair of highly effective



FLORENCE WYLE, R.C.A. *Torso*. Terra Cotta.
Photo Merrill-Nott Ass.



BYLLEE LANG. *Maynard*.

zebras, and Dora Wechsler amusingly reflected the lighter side of war in her pottery group, *At the Canteen*. A small group, *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Robert Norgate, also deserves mention.

The larger works on view included Lucille Oille's *Posthumous Award*, a reclining and disconsolate nude holding her dead husband's award for valour. Emanuel Hahn was represented among the larger

pieces by a massive negroid head, Donald Stewart by the rather too lush *Maya*, Florence Wyle by a strong stone head, *Munition Worker*, and a pottery torso. Another large and effective figure was that of a woman factory worker by Elizabeth Wyn Wood. As a symbolic background, this last work incorporates a large micrometer that seems to bear little sculptural relationship to the figure. It would be interesting to see the micrometer accorded a different treatment or perhaps dispensed with altogether.

The Sculptors' Society of Canada is a relatively small group numbering at present only fourteen members. It is not primarily an exhibiting society, but concerns itself broadly with the welfare of sculpture in Canada. It performs considerable educational work, arranging lectures and supplying slides, and was at one time instrumental in clarifying the customs regulations applying to works of art entering and leaving the Dominion.

The society has held seven Canadian exhibitions since its inception in 1928, some of them shown in Ottawa and Montreal as well as in Toronto. Through the National Gallery of Canada it has sent exhibitions to the United States and to England and plans a travelling exhibition for next September.

FRANCES LORING, A.R.C.A. *Deer*. Limestone relief for approach to Rainbow Bridge, Niagara Falls, Ont.



EMANUEL HAHN,
R.C.A.
Negress



EUGENIA BERLIN
*Mother Deer and
Young*





CLAIR
HELLER
with Horace
Winfield and
her bust of
him.

A SCULPTOR MEETS THE PUBLIC

BY ELEANOR BARTEAUX

THE modelling of a portrait in clay is news when both artist and model carry out their work in full view of patrons and visitors to a public library.

Miss Clair Heller, graduate of the Ontario College of Art, pupil of Emanuel Hahn, and instructor in modelling for the Windsor Art and Handicrafts Guild, was anxious to demonstrate to Windsor citizens just how a sculptor works in clay. There was no need to import a model, for one was already available in the person of Commissionaire Horace Winfield, Carnegie Library guard. Mr. Winfield, a genial gentleman of seventy-five, is a veteran of two wars, and a striking example of the British soldier of the old school. Though this bust was to be made for demonstration purposes, the artist considered it primarily as a work of art, choosing her subject for his sculptural qualities—a certain ruggedness well suited for portrayal in clay. It might be added that Mr. Winfield is very well liked by all, an attribute which the artist felt as being indicative of fineness of character and personality.

A modelling stand and table were brought into the library reading room; an armature was built from donations of wood, wire screening and lead pipe, and a hundred pounds of dry Kentucky clay were mixed with water and worked to the proper consistency. Added to this were a few simple tools of the craft—calipers for taking measurements, wooden spatulas, rubberized sheeting to keep the work moist (difficult to obtain since babies have the priority). Signs announced that Miss Heller would be at the library daily from 5 to 7 p.m. to work on the portrait in clay. Letters telling of this novel art venture were sent to the press, the radio station, members of the Windsor Art and Handicrafts Guild, the Windsor Art Association, and to everyone whom we thought would be interested.

Miss Heller went to work and in two days' time had the armature built up with the mass of clay, while Mr. Winfield sat patiently on the revolving stand and "modelled." We had no need to advertise our project further, for a

steady flow of spectators, men, women, students and younger children, came daily into the library, some for the first time in their lives. They came not only once but repeatedly—to watch, to note progress, and to ask questions of the artist. Art teachers brought students in groups for morning visits. Never once did their attention flag, nor did they fail to express their desire to do modelling themselves. This appreciation led to the formation of children's Saturday morning classes with an average attendance of thirty.

Their interest being awakened, our guests began to read books on Greek sculpture, modern sculpture, to discover that there are great works of sculptural art in Canada, and that an internationally famous artist, Carl Milles, lives and works just across the border at Cranbrook, an art centre known the country over.

For the first two weeks the general remark of those uninitiated in the ways of the sculptor was that the bust "didn't look like the model." By the third week all could see the growing resemblance. Only then did they become reconciled to the artist's explanation that it is impossible to start from the beginning with a perfect resemblance.

Upon the completion of the work, the artist gave a lecture to a capacity audience at the new Willistead Art Gallery, retracing the various steps in the development of her portrait. The climax of the evening was the unveiling of the bust, with the model present, to enthusiastic applause.

This attempt to bring art to the people was successful in every way, not only from the interest created in the art of modelling and sculpture, but in the hidden talents revealed in adults and children alike. We soon found that our patrons had hobbies which they were keen to discuss with us and to show in tangible form. One man, who has remained a silent borrower for some years, now brought in sketches of engines and sailboats which were drawn to scale

from vantage points near the Michigan Central Railway and the Detroit River. Another visitor, an expert pattern-maker by trade, has talked about books with us for many years. Only the other day did he proudly display a beautifully cast and burnished bronze hunting dog, which we immediately claimed for a projected arts and crafts exhibit. We were surprised to learn that one busy housewife models bird figures (she secures the bird pictures from the library) which are sent out of town to be sold. The photographs accompanying this article were taken by a young amateur photographer who brought camera, flash bulbs and other paraphernalia to the library to photograph the bust in various stages of its development.

A short time ago the completed clay model was conveyed to our Guild Workrooms for casting in plaster. Just before its removal one little tot gazed long and earnestly at Mr. Winfield, then turned to scrutinize the portrait. After some minutes of careful inspection she whispered to him, "You must be twins."

Miss Heller is now planning an exhibit of her pupils' work to be held in the Guild Workrooms early next month. Her adult class, numbering twenty-five, ranges in age from sixteen to nearly seventy and includes a busy physician, business women, a violinist, teachers, and others from varied occupations. All of them are doing good work besides finding pleasure and satisfaction in modelling. Several report improved health and relaxation from nervous tension as a result of their creative activity.

Miss Heller is very emphatic in describing the spiritual values of sculpture. The act of producing a work of art in this field demands conscious application of spiritual, mental, emotional and physical power. It requires good health and a well-balanced life. No other art demands so much physical energy. Miss Heller is also convinced that working with clay in itself has curative powers, and thinks modelling will be important in post-war rehabilitation.



PICASSO. *The Tube of Paint.*



GEORGE HENRY, R.A., R.S.A. *The Connoisseur.*
National Gallery of Canada.



RUBENS. *Last Judgment.* Alte Pinakothek,
Munich.



VERMEER. *Girl Reading a Letter.*
Dresden Gallery.

ARE THE MODERN "ISMS" ART?

Second of a Series of Articles by the Editor on Problems and Principles Related to the Understanding of Art.

IF THESE new 'isms' are just a blind alley the ordinary man can forget them, but if they are really beauty and truth, they should be explained to him." With these words J. S. Crockett concluded a letter which appeared in our last issue. In a balanced and inquiring spirit, that letter expressed perplexities which fill the minds of many observers with regard to cubism, surrealism, and the other modern isms. Are these types of art indeed "blind alleys" or are they phases of "beauty and truth?"

First reactions, for most people, are certainly against them. Examine Figs. 1 and 2 among our illustrations. Both are contemporary works of art, painted in the 20th century. The first is an example of one of the isms, in this case cubism; the second is typical of the conservative or conventional phase of modern painting. The average observer, entering an exhibition and finding two works such as these, will probably see in the cubist picture only a meaningless jumble, but will regard the conventional work as normal and attractive, perhaps even beautiful. If he is a self-assured individual, he will no doubt consider these reactions a sufficient ground for pronouncing judgment on the works of art before him. He will condemn the Picasso as "bad art," deriding it with such terms as "grotesque" and "fantastic," and will proclaim the Henry to be "good art," "upholding the high ideals of former days."

In the view of the present writer, the first essential to any intelligent approach to the matter is to realize that our reactions to works of art, and especially our early reactions to new forms of art, are fallible and subject to change. Even a seasoned art critic like Ruskin could go so far wrong that in reviewing an early exhibition of Whistler's work he

described that artist as "ill-educated and conceited," "a wilful impostor," "a coxcomb who asks 200 guineas for flinging a pot of paint in the public's face." Obviously on this occasion Ruskin's reactions were wrong. Whistler has since been recognized as one of the important artists of his period.

Behind Ruskin's mistake—and the history of art is full of similar mistakes in evaluating new forms of art—lies a psychological law. New forms of experience throw the mind into temporary confusion. That confusion is naturally unpleasant to the person experiencing it. Unless he is modest enough to admit himself hopelessly lost, which few care to do, he blames his confusion on the work of art which produced it, condemning that work as bad. In this way men of every generation have not only rejected new forms of art, but have stoned the prophets who attempted to teach them new truth, derided the inventors who first proposed new ways of doing things, and otherwise condemned what they did not understand.

In view of these circumstances the cultivated observer takes care to distinguish between his reactions to a work of art, on the one hand, and his critical evaluation of it, on the other. He realizes that his reactions and tastes are subject to change, that what displeases him today may please him at a later time, and that what he likes at first glance may pale with more intimate acquaintance. Instead of saying that a thing is bad because he does not enjoy it, he simply recognizes that he does not enjoy it. And instead of turning away from it because he does not enjoy it, he studies it with interest, postponing his final judgment until he is thoroughly at home with the point of view which it represents. In this way he avoids gross errors of

judgment and eventually arrives at a mature understanding of the art under consideration.

To return to the isms, it is a fact that many people, after an initial period of bewilderment, study, and delayed judgment, have come to enjoy cubist pictures like the Picasso illustrated. The recurrence of conventionalized angular forms throughout the picture affects them like the repetitions of a motif in a musical composition, affording them definite pleasure through rhythmic design. Combined with this attraction of design, if the work is by so original an artist as Picasso, responsive observers also find a distinctive and beautiful colour harmony, which unfortunately does not appear in our reproduction.

The enjoyment of these observers is further enhanced by the feeling that such work is characteristic of its own time. It is distinctly a 20th century form of art. Place it in any collection of the world's art and you know at once which period it represents, and feel that through it that period has added something new to the heritage of the past. And without doubt it owes its distinctiveness, not merely to a desire to be different, but to the fact that, in some obscure way, it expresses the underlying thought-currents of its epoch.

In this connection, many possible interpretations suggest themselves. One relates to science. The modern world has become aware that reality is something more profound and complex than is indicated by human visual images. The physicist in his laboratory has dissolved the visible shapes of things into invisible atoms and electrons, spinning about like infinitesimal stellar systems. The cubist painter might claim that a picture like Fig. 1 is an artistic counterpart of the kind of world which physics has revealed to us, and that therefore it embodies new insights into reality. It is at the very least a form of art conditioned by the intellectual influences of the modern world.

Those who share such points of view

feel that work like Fig. 2 suffers from what might be called "time lag." Superficially considered it is an attractive picture, but what does it add to our concept of the 20th century, and what does it offer us artistically which we have not already seen better done in the work of earlier times? Compare it with the interior by Vermeer reproduced in Fig. 4. A glance is sufficient to indicate that the modern interior is little more than a diluted echo of the 17th century one. Those who do not know their history of art may admire the work of such an artist as Henry, but to one whose mind is already saturated with Vermeer, Henry appears both secondary and derivative.

Most conventional modern art suffers from this weakness. Instead of "upholding the high ideals of former days," it does just the contrary. The real ideal of the great periods of the past was to be creatively true to the conditions of their own age. To follow that ideal the contemporary artist must be true to the conditions of today. This he can never do by imitating the past. For this reason Henry, though he imitates Vermeer in form, is alien to him in spirit, whereas Picasso, following the creative spirit of Vermeer and other old masters, arrives at quite different forms.

It seems necessary then, to recognize that cubism is an authentic form of 20th century art, significant alike in colour and design and in its relationship to the mental atmosphere of the modern world. At the same time a full study of the case would seem to indicate that it is also subject to certain limitations. What those limitations are can be suggested by a comparison between our Picasso and the Rubens illustrated in Fig. 3. It is apparent that the Rubens has a design in many respects similar to that of the Picasso, a design involving the rhythmic repetition and sequence of relatively small and closely knit units throughout the canvas. We can derive from the Rubens at least as much enjoyment of design as from the Picasso. But whereas

Continued on page 223

LEONARD
BROOKS,
A.R.C.A.
Winter Farm.
Silk Screen
Print.



SILK SCREEN EXPERIMENT

STIRRED by recent developments in silk screen colour printing, many Canadian artists are now planning to experiment with this medium. What kind of results will they get when they do so? As one answer to this question, *Canadian Art* takes pleasure in reproducing *Winter Farm* by Leonard Brooks, A.R.C.A., now Petty Officer Brooks, R.C.N.V.R. This print is the outcome of the artist's first experiment with the silk screen process and was undertaken as an exploratory exercise rather than a final production. It is nevertheless of real interest, not only for the free drawing and delicate colour of the original, but also as being one of the first Canadian silk screen prints in which the entire process has been carried out by the artist himself.

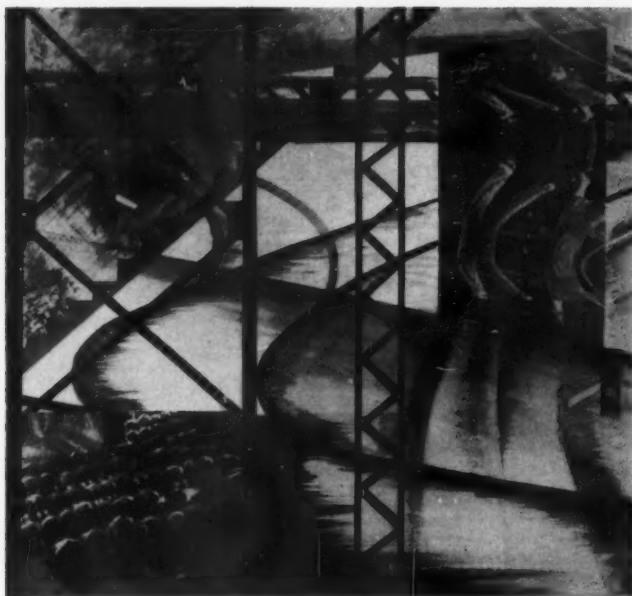
Commenting on his experiment, P/O Brooks made the following observations: "With the help of Sub-Lieut. Gordon Stranks, who had had commercial experience in silk screen printing, I chose

a subject sufficiently complicated to get away from poster-like effects and thus test the more sensitive possibilities of the medium.

"The chief temptation to be overcome, I found, was that of wanting to see results too soon. It requires considerable discipline to postpone the great moment of making the first proof until one is sure that everything possible has been done to perfect the drawing on the screen.

"After that it is chiefly a matter of patience to go on printing until the full edition is on paper. Patience, indeed, is one of the prime ingredients for this type of work. It is needed in cleaning the screen after each colour, in obtaining the correct register of one colour over the other, and in many other ways. For the finest results, each process must be carried out by the artist himself, for there is a variation even in the amount of pressure used on the squeegee which warrants his personal work.

Continued on page 224



YOUNG CANADA

*Brief studies of the art and ideas
of the coming generation.*

GORDON WEBBER

Left: Distorted Man.
Art Gallery of Toronto.

Right: Man's Problem.

THE fact that a picture does not represent natural forms in a natural manner does not imply that it has no meaning. Meaning lies in the ideas which a thing expresses, not in the forms which it represents. Ideas can be expressed through new techniques like those of abstract or semi-abstract design, and when so expressed are more stimulating to the modern mind than when conveyed by older and more stereotyped methods.

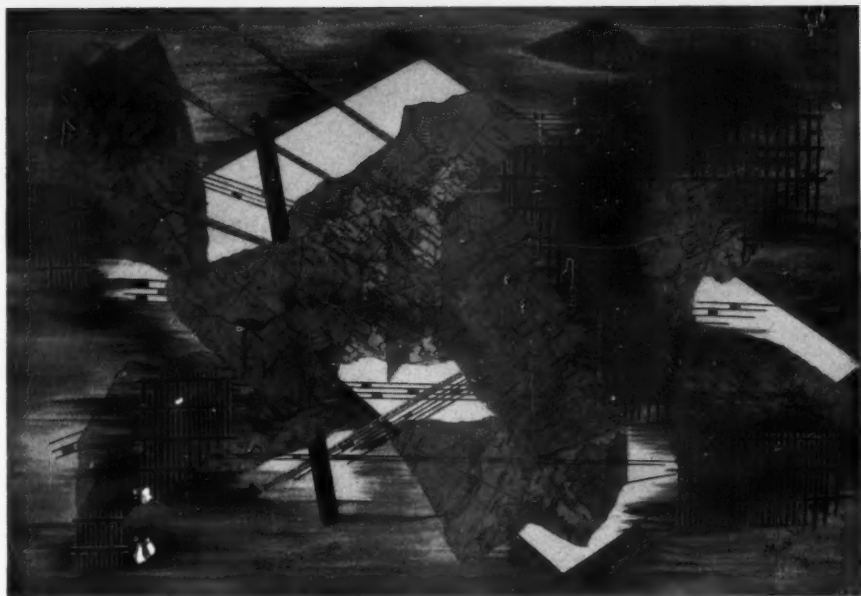
Such, in essence, appears to be the present pictorial philosophy of Gordon Webber. Referring to his painting *Distorted Man*, reproduced above, Webber says, "I composed this picture to express the inhuman atmosphere of big cities where little natural movement is possible." With this statement to direct our observations, we can follow the steps through which the artist has arrived at his result. A geometrical framework of design conveys a feeling of the inflexibility of an urban environment. In the upper right corner, the distorted images of a man and a woman symbolize the effect of such an environment on humanity. At the lower left, rows of prostrate worshippers suggest the devotions of mankind to the false gods of ruthless mechanization.

Of our second illustration, *Man's*

Problem, Webber writes, "My aim here was to show how nations are changing their relationship in time, distance, and degrees of human welfare during the war. In some countries the people have been almost completely subjugated by repression of the natural development of living. This is indicated by bars. The white area is a sheet for a new plan of order. Public statements are typed into the picture giving the aims of reconstruction."

In both these pictures it is evident that we have a combination of two recent artistic trends which have usually been conceived as independent of each other, if not actually opposed to each other, namely social consciousness and abstraction. Social consciousness provides the idea behind the composition; techniques derived from abstraction become the language through which the idea is expressed. Apart from an interest in geometrical relationships, these techniques involve the use of *collage*, or the pasting into the design of pre-existing elements like photographs, maps and typed inscriptions. The variety of means employed is indicated by the fact that *Distorted Man* is a combination of water colour, tempera, dye, and photography.

"We live today in a changing world,"



Webber asserts. "This change and the unfamiliar relationships resulting from it cause many people to feel disturbed for the future. If they could see the change as a growth of needs and fulfillments, they would realize that it can be very useful. Even the changing appearance of everyday things like dress, cars, dwellings and telephones, and most of all the physical changes in distance and speed, mean new opportunities for people and, of course, in the eyes of the painter they open up new vistas. The modern painter is simply the one who keeps abreast of his world by introducing new relationships into his work.

"Everything I paint is the result of conditions in the world about me. Perhaps it is the new forms used in traffic signals, with their rhythmical shapes and space relationships, or the receding lights of a moving train. I carry the impression left by such things in my mind. Later it becomes a painting."

Webber was born at Sault Ste. Marie. He began his studies as a Saturday scholarship student at the Ontario College of Art in 1924 and later continued them at the Toronto Art Students League. In 1930 he became instructor in art at Pickering College. Since that time he has divided his efforts between teach-

ing, continuing his studies, and carrying on his personal creative work. For several years he was one of Arthur Lismer's assistants in the work of the Children's Art Centre in Toronto.

In 1939 Webber entered the School of Art and Design in Chicago, from which he graduated in 1942 as Bachelor of the Colour and Light Workshop. His four-year course included studies in architecture and science, as well as pictorial design. Upon returning to Canada last year, Webber became an instructor in the Department of Architecture at McGill University. He also teaches in the School of Art and Design of the Montreal Art Association. He is a member of the Canadian Group of Painters.

Webber's current work might be described as transitional between abstraction and representation. It will be interesting to see whether he continues to work in this intermediate mode or pursues an evolution toward more naturalistic ways of expressing his ideas. His earlier work showed ability for the robust representation of landscape and the human form. Intriguing as are his present experiments, it would be regrettable if his gifts in this other direction did not receive at least a share of his future creative effort. W.A.

W. LANGDON KIHN
Gitwinkool Totem Poles.



EDWIN
HOLGATE
*Totem Poles,
Gitsegiuklas.*



INDIAN ART IN CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

The totem poles of the Tsimyan Indians of British Columbia are among the finest achievements of aboriginal art in North America. Strange as it may seem, these masterpieces of primitive art were created, not at some remote period of prehistoric time, but in the 19th century: age of steam and electricity. Although the West Coast Indians had practiced carving from ancient times, they did not succeed in expanding their work to a large scale until after they received metal tools from white traders. The great period of totem pole carving occurred between 1830 and 1890. The poles were heraldic symbols of family pride and succession akin to European coats of arms. They have been an inspiration to many modern artists, as suggested by the accompanying illustrations. W. Langdon Kihn is an American painter who has specialized in the treatment of Indian subjects. Edwin Holgate, R.C.A., is one of Canada's well known contemporary artists. Both the paintings shown are in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, through the courtesy of which they are reproduced.



COAST TO COAST IN ART ONTARIO

OTTAWA

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

On the close of the Army Exhibition, which by the way has been shown in Washington at the Corcoran Gallery, the National Gallery gave its first floor galleries over to the R.C.A.F. Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings. Officially opened by the Rt. Hon. Malcolm MacDonald, High Commissioner for Great Britain on April 28th, the exhibition is fully reviewed in this issue by F/O Charles Goldhamer, who was responsible for its organization.

On view concurrently was the "Artists for Victory" exhibition, a collection of one hundred original prints by American artists showing the United States in the war. Many well known artists such as

Gropper, Grosz, Lozowick, Soyer, Spruance and Sternberg were included as well as many newcomers. The show as a whole gave an impression of youth, particularly in its rather obvious and self-conscious approach to dramatic and heroic themes. Later the exhibition is to go on tour and should furnish an interesting yard stick by which to measure what has been done along similar lines by Canadian artists. We may find we have been doing better than we think.

At present the H. S. Southam collection is on exhibition. The recent unfortunate fire at Mr. Southam's house made this possible, as he kindly gave permission for his collection to be shown at the Gallery while the house is being rebuilt. The collection falls into two main divisions, French painting from



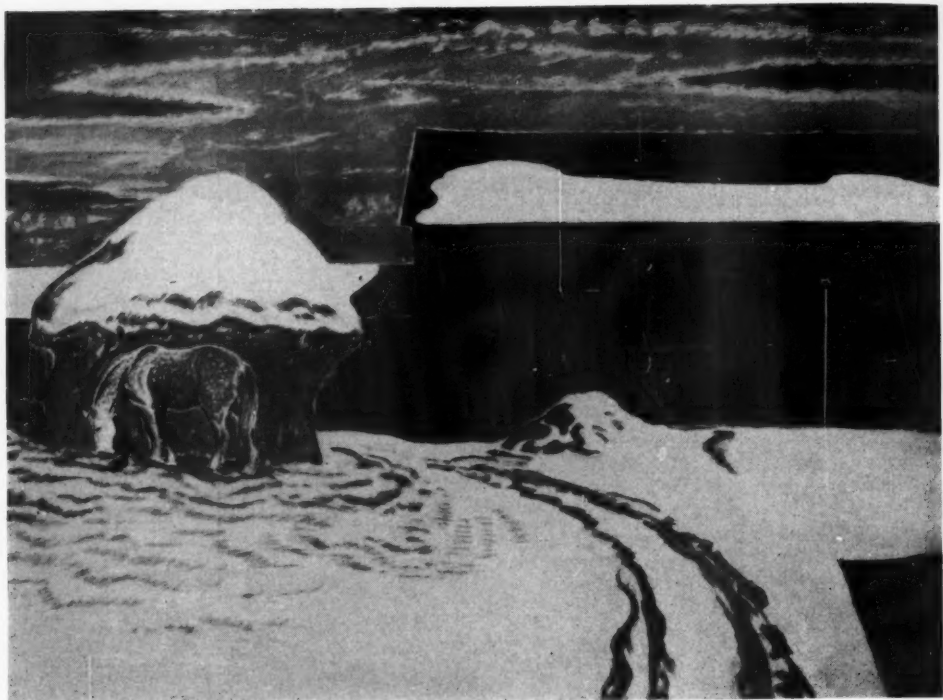
Two Paintings from the H. S. Southam Collection. Left:
MICHELE MARIESCHI. *Venetian Scene*. Above: A. Y. JACKSON.
Northern Landscape.

Poussin to Matisse, with the emphasis on 19th and 20th century artists, and Canadian painting consisting of a really magnificent group by Jackson, Harris, Lismer and others, and some exceptionally good sketches by Thomson and MacDonald. This must surely be the finest private Canadian collection in existence. Merely to pass from the French to the Canadian sections is an experience in itself, for the strong individualism of the Canadian painters in their vision and interpretation of their native landscape is almost overwhelming.

Lawren Harris, recently elected President of the Federation of Canadian Artists, has been in Ottawa lately to feel out the situation with regard to the Government's attitude towards the

Federation's program for the development of the arts in Canada by the establishment of community art centres throughout the Dominion. He has conferred with the Chairman of the House of Commons Special Committee on Reconstruction and Re-establishment and no doubt the results of this interview will be made public in due course. We understand he was not discouraged which augurs well.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Hand Arts and Crafts, represented by H. O. McCurry, Dr. J. G. Bouchard and Deane Russell, has also had a meeting with the Special Committee on Reconstruction. The support of the former's recommendations is assured, and the proposal that its plan for the encouragement and growth of the handi-



Above:
THOREAU MACDONALD
Winter Morning.
Recent addition to
the National Gallery
series of silk screen
prints.



Left:
JOHN LYMAN
Bermuda.
In the collection of
the National Gallery
of Canada.

craft movement be carried out in co-operation with the National Gallery, was approved in principle without one dissenting voice. The Gallery hopes to assist the Interdepartmental Committee by arranging a series of exhibitions on various crafts. These will tour the country, not only to give the public an insight into the technical processes involved but also to foster an appreciation of good examples of each craft, and so help in the important work of setting standards in which existing craft organizations have already done so much.

Walter Abell's broadcasts on "Art and Democracy" have caused considerable comment and should do a great deal to keep people awake to the possibilities for the development of the arts in society, and especially of their place in the future life of this country. It will be with much regret that Mr. Abell's many friends in Canada will hear of his prospective departure to take up a position at Michigan State College.

As we go to press an exhibition of Latin American Posters opens. We also hear that the exhibition of Canadian paintings arranged by the National Gallery for the American Federation of Arts has been very well received. It is now in Culver, and other bookings include Memphis, St. Paul, Wichita, Topeka, and the California Palace of the Legion of Honour, San Francisco.

ELSEWHERE IN OTTAWA

Raymonde Gravel and Hugh Robertson have recently held one man shows. To come is one of lino blocks and water colours by Peter Sager, a young sculptor from Vancouver, who has arrived in Ottawa to join the staff of the National Film Board.

The National Film Society has just closed a successful season of which the newly created Film Survey Group has proved to be one of its most interesting ventures. This Group, formed for those who wished to make a serious study of

the development of the film in Europe and America, has shown some of the experiments and outstanding masterpieces of the great Russian, French, German and American directors. These, introduced by special film authorities, have dealt with the work of the avant-garde, and such varied trends as expressionism, realism and surrealism.

K.M.F.

TORONTO

THE ART GALLERY OF TORONTO

One of the most important experiments of the Art Gallery of Toronto this past season has been the scheme of circulating exhibitions. In answer to an increasing demand for small educational exhibitions, mostly from the cities and communities within about 300 miles around Toronto, the Art Gallery brought six exhibitions from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. They covered a variety of subjects and were titled as follows: Ancestral Sources of Modern Painting, The Shapes of Things, Furniture Design Today, Housing—Recent Developments in Europe and America, War Posters Today, and Look at Your Neighbourhood. A seventh exhibition of Canadian silk screen prints was also circulated.

The exhibitions were in circulation from October to the end of May. During that time they had 44 showings at universities, art galleries, schools, Y.M.C.A.'s, libraries and community centres in the following cities: Port Hope, Windsor, Kingston, London, Niagara Falls, Galt, St. Catharines, Hamilton, Montreal, Toronto, Sudbury and Brantford. They were rented by the Art Gallery from the Museum of Modern Art for the eight month period and the organizations to which they were sent were asked to subscribe to their cost if possible. Those with funds subscribed from \$8.00 to \$25.00 per exhibition; those without, which were in the majority, hoped by showing the exhibitions to arouse sufficient interest to find some



Planning Toronto's Circulating Exhibition Program. Left to Right: Martin Baldwin, Curator, the Art Gallery of Toronto; Elodie Courter, Director of Circulating Exhibitions, Museum of Modern Art, New York; W. R. Cook, Program Consultant, Canadian Y.M.C.A. War Services.

way to obtain funds for next year and many feel that this plan may meet with success.

Recently a general letter was sent to the organizations which had participated, asking their opinion of the project. The response was very enthusiastic. Many believed the exhibitions filled a definite need and wanted more for next season, especially Canadian exhibitions on such subjects as town and community planning, painting in various media, photography and handicrafts. All in all the experiment was felt to be a successful one and the increasing demand for this form of visual social education a very healthy sign. It is hoped that both the number and the itinerary of these circulating exhibitions will be expanded in the future.

Another worthwhile development has taken place in the vicinity of the Art Gallery. To quote from the Gallery's pamphlet on recent exhibitions: "Under the auspices of the Canadian Handicraft

Guild the old gate-keeper's lodge in Grange Park is being opened as 'Craft House'. It will be placed at the disposal of groups of craftsmen for meetings and demonstrations; it will house interesting exhibitions of the work of these craftsmen; and in it will gradually be collected a small reference library concerning crafts and materials.

"The opening exhibition is that of the Spinners and Weavers of Ontario. The association was formed seven years ago, and has at present thirty members, since the exigencies of war have reduced membership from former times. The object of this organization is to stimulate interest in crafts, and to raise the standard of spinning and weaving in this country. It has also taken on a war project of significance. Canadian wool was donated to the Spinners and Weavers, and they dyed it, spun it and knitted it into garments for the Red Cross to be sent to England. This not only represents their vitality as a group, but repre-

sents their policy in action—their special interest in the development of the use of Canadian wool.”

The exhibition of this association in Craft House, which is situated on the inner edge of the grounds around the Gallery, is one of the five Canadian exhibitions that the Art Gallery is now showing. The others are the Canadian Group of Painters, the Canadian Guild of Potters, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, and the Canadian Society of Graphic Art. The water colour exhibition is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Together these exhibitions give a well-rounded impression of the variety of the media in which Canadian artists are working and of their inherent understanding, for the most part, of the possibilities and limitations of each medium. In many cases they have used their materials effectively, with imagination and in a wide range of refreshing ways. This leaves the satisfactory feeling that a sound basis of ideas and the technical ability to carry them out is being built up and is gradually spreading in Canadian art—perhaps not great-

ness in itself as yet, but a solid foundation for its growth.

MARGARET TUCKER.

ELSEWHERE IN TORONTO

R.C.A.F. War Mural: The mural painting now decorating the north wall of the main hall of the Union Station in Toronto is one of the most ambitious and extensive projects of its kind yet undertaken in the Dominion. A year or two ago the Writers' Artists' Broadcasters' and Musicians' Council of Toronto conceived the idea of erecting a large mural painting to publicize the achievements of the R.C.A.F., the work to be carried out by a group of Toronto artists under the supervision of the Council. Donations from the R.C.A.F. and other interested bodies and the co-operation of various art societies and artists made the idea practicable. The Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways generously consented to place wall space in the Union Station at the disposal of the Council for the erection of the mural.

Air Force Mural in Union Station, Toronto. Designed by NANCY BURDEN.



A prize offered for the most suitable design was won by Nancy Burden. The actual work of painting was done in a little over a week by a group of artists who contributed their services free as a part of their war effort. The group included William McCrow, director, George James Angliss, Joy Bain, Helen Faed and Allan Wargon. The project is the first in Canada to be carried through on a co-operative basis by a group of artists and has given considerable stimulus to the younger artists of Toronto. Following the successful completion of this work in March, it is hoped that the other armed services may become interested in the erection of similar murals, possibly on the other walls of the main hall in the Union Station.

About forty outstanding contemporary Canadian artists from the Atlantic to the Pacific were included in the Exhibition of Canadian Art held in the Fine Art Galleries of the T. Eaton Company, Toronto, during April. This exhibition, in which the emphasis was on modern trends, is worth commenting on, not only for its quality, but also because it represents something of an innovation in the field of Canadian art. Too often our exhibitions, while bringing pleasure to the public, bring to the artist little more than the somewhat barren satisfaction of seeing his picture hung. Here an attempt was made, with a scale of prices calculated to appeal to a wide range of people, to bring the public and artist together in a way that would be of financial satisfaction to the latter and which would help build up a market for his work. That such a venture can be successful is to be seen by the results, for forty-five paintings were sold. Similar experiments in the United States have likewise met with success and it is to be hoped that further developments along this line will take place in Canada. Here is a great opportunity for large commercial firms to encourage the growth

of a living Canadian art by promoting a less nebulous relation between artist and public.

D.M.

LONDON

THE LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ART MUSEUM

An exhibition of the work of the Children's Saturday Art classes was opened in April with Dorothy Medhurst, of the Children's Art Centre in Toronto, as special speaker for the occasion. In closing her address on "The History and Development of Children's Art Classes," she voiced a challenge to the citizens of London by pointing out the opportunity that lay before them to develop in their children a fine cultural sense through the use of the co-ordinated services available at their Public Library and Art Museum. These services include the film, record, sheet music, picture and book collections, as well as exhibitions in the gallery and the use of the building itself for classes, concerts, group meetings and discussions.

Furthering the Museum's policy of encouraging the efforts of local art and craft groups, among our recent exhibitions has been the work of two outstanding Kirchner artists, Jane Van Every and Hilda Ruston.

The Chilean Exhibition seen here in April has been returned to Toledo after a most successful tour in Canada. It would be interesting to see how Chilean artists will be painting a decade from now, when they will possibly have outgrown the strong European influence so evident in their work today and have found expression in an art that is more their own.

During May, the Ontario Society of Artists exhibition was shown here after its opening at the Art Gallery of Toronto. This was followed by the Sculptors' Society of Canada, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. To come are the exhibitions of the Western Art League in June and the Royal Canadian Academy in July.

WINDSOR

The Royal Canadian Academy 1944 Travelling Exhibition from the National Gallery of Canada, sponsored by the Windsor Art Association, opened at the Willstead Art Gallery in April. It brought many visitors and art teachers from the elementary schools with their numerous classes.

On May 14th the Art Association held its annual meeting. After the presentation of the reports from the various committees and the election of officers, the guest speaker Mr. Cyril H. Cane, British Consul General in Detroit, gave a most interesting and informative address on "British Art in Wartime." Since the gallery was opened last October the Association has more than doubled its

membership. It has also sponsored six exhibitions, five lectures, four Sunday afternoon membership meetings with special speakers, and three programs in which Polish and Russian groups assisted.

The final lecture in the series arranged by the Art Association was given by Miss Olga Fricker of Detroit on the development of modern ballet, with interpretations by seven of her ballet group. The group danced to the music of Bach, Schubert, Debussy and Shostakovich.

A number of sales were made from the recent exhibition of the Canadian Painter-Etchers and Engravers Touring Collection which was very well received here. The children's Saturday morning program ended in the middle of May.

DAPHNE HEIN.

QUEBEC

MONTREAL

THE ART ASSOCIATION OF MONTREAL

The Museum of Fine Arts has recovered its normal life after the onslaught of public participation in the Loan Exhibition of "Five Centuries of Dutch Art." The net result in attendance during four weeks of the exhibition was counted as over 100,200 visitors—another record.

It is a curious thing how war, genuine sympathy for distressed people, and art mix in a common cause at such times. This is easy enough to understand in some of its aspects, because the overwhelming volume of publicity and the enlisting of all kinds of agencies toward the mutual fulfilment of the aims of such an effort, assure its success. So it should be. But the question arises, "Why can't it happen in peace time?" With such organization and enlisted, sympathetic aid, and the showing of still more vital things in art, almost anything could be achieved. A modern exhibition on housing, education, the launching of a plan for child training, the establishment of community centres of art,

could succeed equally well under such auspices. As it is, so great is the concentration on this one patriotic effort that there is little left for organization, money for insurance, publicity and maintenance, to arrange other exhibitions successfully. The Spring Exhibition, for example, could be a real spring festival with publicity, lectures, entertainment and gatherings of artists and people. As it is, it comes as an anti-climax, with competition in the memory of the same walls just previously hung with the works of Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Hals and Vermeer. But in spite of this, the 61st Spring Exhibition is a brighter show than usual. For one thing, there are few enough paintings to assure adequate spacing on the walls. But down in the basement, they are stacked by the hundreds, despised and rejected of juries, to be tried out again by their painters on some other organization, at some other date.

The Children's Exhibition is an annual affair at the Art Association. This year it appears in a new guise with great murals about air routes, ways of



Pompeian Villa: murals, models, and sculptured frieze. A project in ancient history by boys and girls 12 and 13 years old. Art Association of Montreal.

getting around and of sending communications by light, fire, signals, telephone and telegraph, models of railway stations, a planetarium with the stars, sun and other heavenly bodies suspended in space, a wonderful Pompeian villa with rich murals and modelled panels of a Pan-Athenic procession, an Egyptian tomb and other things in history and in modern life as seen and made by children from the ages of 4 to 16. Child-art is experimenting with modern education in visual form and it is a thrilling experience to get the child's idea and his way of learning.

On April 26th the School of Art and Design held its closing assembly. A large audience witnessed the awarding of scholarships, given by interested firms and people. A collection of experiments in basic design made a colourful contribution to the school's results of work done. Twelve students were given scholarships into the Art School from the Junior Course.

The Montreal Camera Club opened its 3rd International Salon of Photography on May 12th. The camera artists are accepted in all art galleries nowadays and their exhibitions are interest-

ing and possess definitely growing aesthetic qualities. Photographers are much alive to their privileges. They work hard at their prints and take their artistic responsibilities to the craft seriously. They appear to have solved the jury question by an ingenious electric monitor system of anonymous recording of votes which enables a jury member to say exactly what he wants done with a submitted print—*out, in or doubtful*—by just pressing an individual button. Academies, art societies, and art juries generally should investigate. It puts selection of pictures into an impersonal class and produces an unbiased silently generous, or painlessly merciless result.

The annual report for 1943 recorded a total attendance of nearly 100,000 for the past year and also the numerous acquisitions and purchases made for the permanent collection and for the Museum.

The Educational Department of the Art Association has closed its season of effort and activity with children, students and grown ups.

The Summer School of Art opens on July 4th.

ARTHUR LISMER.

ELSEWHERE IN MONTREAL

The Dominion Gallery has had four exhibitions in 1944 which contributed something to a complete picture of Canadian art, although one of them was actually not Canadian but European. The first, twentieth century French and German painting and sculpture, if not comprehensive, nevertheless contained some delightful works of art by such well known artists as Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard, Daumier, Picasso, Lehmbruck, Grosz, and Otto Dix.

John Lyman's exhibition covered his painting from 1913 to 1943. The small early sketches are delightful and fresh in colour, with an emphasis on pattern which is reminiscent of his teacher and friend Matisse. The later works are more subdued, more formal in design, and more restrained in mood, with an interest in form which is closer to the ideals of Poussin and Cezanne. One of his strongest portraits was a sternly painted study of himself.

In April there was an exhibition by Sybil Kennedy, Jori Smith, Allan Harrison and Jacques de Tonnancour, a group of four Montreal artists who had little more in common than the fact that they were exhibiting together. Sybil Kennedy showed sculpture and little abstract water colour sketches. One bronze of a woman, called *Grief*, had a poignant rhythmic quality and was particularly impressive. Her Negro sculpture is lively, full of a jiving, jitterbug spirit, amusingly presented in glaring white plaster. There were rows of small paintings by Jori Smith—slight in approach, unpretentiously gay in colour, and paintings of children of French Canadian villages with thin, emaciated bodies and large, sorrowful eyes.

Allan Harrison's paintings are laboured, carefully considered and tremendously sure. Quite emotionless and without any spontaneity, they depend, as classical painting does, upon form and tone alone. Some of the earlier sketches are in a more light-hearted mood. The painting of the Louvre has a tender,

lyric quality. Harrison's later works are strong and emphatic, especially his *House on Dorchester St.* and *Still Life*.

Jacques de Tonnancour is an enchanting painter—his colour and line are so decorative, his drawing so sure. His paintings of women show a great feeling for the gestures and movements of the human body. His landscapes are moody, perhaps because he uses black so liberally; his drawings are simple studies in decorative, expressive line. All his work is growing away from its similarity to Matisse and Goodridge Roberts and developing into a style which is quite his own.

The fourth exhibition, by members of the Group of Seven, Varley, Jackson, Lismer and Harris, proved how far from one another the members of the Group have grown. It also showed how much freer their painting is (excepting Harris') than the painting we usually see in Montreal. Harris exhibited studies of the north—cold, blue and formalized, as most of his landscapes are. *Coldwell Bay*, *Lake Superior* was one of the least remote and revealed the artist as a master of design. Varley's painting was punctuated with a new allegorical vein. He has made use of abstract forms to break up light, and also of the human figure as in *Liberation* and *War 1943*. There are some studies of people: a naval officer, conventional and human, another of a hoyden with wicked blue eyes. His landscape sketches in water colour are vivid and free.

Lismer's earlier work seems filled with elemental forces; his later paintings are calmer. *Rock and Old Pine* has the simplicity and restraint of a Chinese painting. Jackson's landscapes are imbued with that sensitive tonality which is characteristic of his work. There are his usual barns, rocks, snow and water, painted in a mood much gentler than Lismer's.

The Gazette review of this exhibition stated that the members of the Group of Seven were widely travelled. This is amusingly true. The Arctic, the Mari-

times, Muskoka, all parts of Canada have served as subjects for these artists who were determined to become Canadian painters by painting Canada. As pioneer artists in Canada, they rejected the art of the past. Their work was dashing, uninhibited and unrestrained. As painters they were courageous; they were often damned by the Ontario public, but they stayed, and they continued to paint in that shocking manner which was, in a large part, responsible for the liberation of the modern movement of painting in this country.

JEAN BOGGS.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN ARTISTS, QUEBEC REGION

Although the projected membership campaign has not yet begun, the Quebec Region of the Federation of Canadian Artists is growing in numbers as appreciation of the principal object of the F.C.A. grows. That object is to unite all Canadian artists and related professional workers for mutual support in promoting common aims and for the expression of the artist's point of view as a creative factor in the national life of Canada, and to attain official recognition of the artist in society.

"Art in the Community" was the subject of a general meeting on May 4th. The speakers were Dr. Arthur Lismer, Miss Avis Fyshe, Jules Bazin, Fritz Brandtner and Gordon Webber. They emphasized that it is in the interest of each to support the needs of all and that artists must probe deeply their willingness and fitness to serve the national cause. It was the opinion of the meeting that the best programs for the arts which may be adopted by the Government will fail, unless both artists and the public are aware of the purpose to be served. Accordingly artists must be prepared to do the work needed to inform themselves and the public of what has been done and of the existing services in the whole field of the arts and culture in Canada. It was agreed that not until all concerned are con-

vinced of the necessity for all artists and cultural bodies to work willingly in co-operation, shall we have proved our understanding or have a united front.

Other recent activities not previously reported included a meeting of sculptors and craftsmen on May 11th, and co-operation with the Writers', Artists', Broadcasters' War Council of Montreal, in a forum, "Whither Canadian Painting?", held in the Windsor Hotel on April 28th. The members of the panel for this discussion were Stanley Cosgrove, Henry Eveleigh, Maurice Gagnon, Harry Mayerovitch and Fred Taylor. Another meeting in co-operation with the W.A.B.C. was held in the Ritz Carlton on June 3rd, when M. Koudriavtzev of the Soviet Embassy at Ottawa, spoke on "Art in the Soviet Union."

The Quebec Region is anxious to maintain direct liaison with all other regions through the exchange of reports and news. These should be addressed to Jules Bazin, Honorary Secretary, 3535 Durocher Street, Montreal.

F.B.T.

QUEBEC

THE MUSEUM OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

Four noted artists are exhibiting their works in Quebec this month. They are Adrien Hébert, R.C.A., Edwin Holgate, R.C.A., Marc-Aurèle Fortin, A.R.C.A., all painters, and Henri Hébert, R.C.A., sculptor. The show is taking place in one of the large galleries of the Provincial Museum. Mr. Paul Rainville, curator of the Museum, hung each painter's works separately with the result that the individuality of each can be studied at leisure.

Seldom do we find such marked difference between three painters. Adrien Hébert's pictures are quietly representative. He does not seek interpretation or deformation, but draws his subject as it is without changing or eliminating

whatever reality presents before his eyes. A fondness for dramatic sunlight effects is noticeable, especially in his harbour scenes where boats are brilliantly lighted by the sun sending its rays through an opening in the clouds. His colour is not very strong even where it ought to be. The general impression is gray and brown. Emotionally he is moved far more by line and contour than by colour and volume.

Edwin Holgate's pictures are not representative but more in a decorative vein. He likes design and arrangement of forms. Nature for him is not to be copied but built up on a certain basis of geometrical beauty. His nudes are surrounded by a carefully studied landscape that enhances their curving silhouette. More of a draughtsman than a colourist, he leaves nothing to instinct but builds up the architecture of his compositions to please his reason rather than his sentiment. This is felt in all his paintings. The colour, although generally cold, is always in good taste. His portraits are especially noteworthy for their delightful patterned backgrounds and excellent drawing. Outstanding are

Coolie Girl, Jamaica and two charming small drawings *The Beach* and *Nude*. There are also woodcuts, a medium in which Holgate has always excelled.

Marc-Aurèle Fortin is an instinctive painter. In contrast with Holgate he does not reason out his composition and does not seek some sort of pattern but goes at it with spontaneous emotion. The result is sometimes very brutal. He is a colourist above everything and does not bother very much about drawing. Noticeable is the amusing scale of his figures as compared to the objects surrounding them. There is nothing of a representative nature about Fortin's pictures. Everything is transformed according to Fortin's world. He is not influenced by anyone. He is himself. His large oils may be offensive to many but his splendid water colours must be praised for their transparency and brilliant colour.

Several pieces of Henri Hébert's sculpture attracted attention, especially his *Danseuse au Repos* with its beautiful linear rhythm, and the strong head of Alphonse Jongers.

JEAN-PAUL LEMIEUX.

MARITIME PROVINCES

HALIFAX

The Dalhousie University Art Group concluded this season's series of exhibitions with the showing of the Canadian Group of Painters Travelling Exhibition. This, like the preceding exhibitions of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour and the Maritime Art Association, aroused great interest both in the city and university, thanks to the splendid co-operation of the local art groups.

During one of the exhibitions Mr. J. H. Laing arranged for the showing of two coloured sound films depicting the work of A. Y. Jackson and the organiza-

tion of arts and crafts in the province of Quebec.

These activities were sponsored by the Nova Scotia College of Art, the Nova Scotia Society of Artists, the Nova Scotia Museum of Fine Art, and the Dalhousie University Art Group, and since the record of attendances showed a steadily increasing interest, it is to be hoped that they will be continued during the coming winter.

R. L. DE C. H. SAUNDERS.

An interesting exhibition of wood sculpture by John L. Bradford, a member of the Nova Scotia Society of Artists, was held at the Granville Gal-

leries in April. The entire collection was distinguished by originality of design and brilliant craftsmanship. The pieces, ranging in size from tiny talisman idols $\frac{1}{2}$ " high to small totem poles 7" in height, are carved with great delicacy and skill from a variety of woods which are stained with wood dyes or highly polished to bring out the colour and texture. Well displayed and well arranged, the exhibition attracted numbers of enthusiastic visitors and almost every item in the collection was sold.

DOROTHY HENDERSON.

Also in April was the 18th Annual Exhibition of the Nova Scotia Society of Artists, which was held at the Lord Nelson Hotel and opened by the Hon. H. E. Kendall, the Lieut.-Governor of Nova Scotia. We regret that no first-hand review of this exhibition was submitted to us. From the account by Dorothy Henderson in *The Halifax Mail*, we gather that the 87 paintings on view included characteristic works by Frances Bayne, Ruth Wainwright, Marion Bond, Stanley Royle, David Whitsman, Marguerite Zwicker, and other well known Maritime artists.

SAINT JOHN

The Saint John Art Club, Inc., closed the season with a panel discussion by members of the Industrial Design Study Group. This group, consisting of Ruth Starr, John Bishop, Walter Fultz, Edith Hudson, George Buckley, Jean Humphrey and Julia Crawford, has held a number of meetings on various problems. It is hoped that a report of the results may be given later.

The committee at work on a proposed art gallery here has met several times. Though handicapped in many respects, with as yet only \$1,300 in Victory Bonds, the Club is determined that an art centre of some kind must be achieved if proper inspiration is to be given to the people.

Recent exhibitions have included the

American Silk Screen Prints from the National Gallery and American Etchings and Lithographs.

Jack Humphrey who had a one man show at the Granville Galleries in Halifax a short while ago, is now making studies and sketches of local shipbuilding plants. Mrs. Ruth Spear Vassie has been substituting for Julia Crawford as art instructor at the Vocational School for the past five months.

The Club wishes to take this opportunity to express its appreciation of *Canadian Art* and of the broadcasts on art by Walter Abell.

JULIA CRAWFORD.

SACKVILLE

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY

For the period of University Convocation May 19th to 23rd, the work of the students of the College of Art was exhibited at the Owens Museum of Fine Arts. Examples of mural painting, portrait painting, life drawing and painting, illustration, commercial art, etc. were on display, showing in progressive stages the courses required for the Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree. Also on view was the work of the Department of Handicraft, with examples of jewelry, pottery, woodcarving, weaving, leatherwork and basketry.

During the year University students had the advantage of seeing a number of exhibitions brought to the Art Gallery by the Sackville Art Association. The majority of these were sponsored by the National Gallery of Canada, through the Maritime Art Association, and included the Canadian Group of Painters, the Canadian Society of Graphic Art, Canadian Silk Screen Prints, the Maritime Art Exhibition, the Canadian Society of Painter-Etchers and Engravers, and American Etchings and Lithographs.

In February the faculty and students of the university and the public were invited to an evening on "Art in Action," at which students demonstrated work in all branches of the fine arts and handi-

crafts. This aroused much interest; indeed, it is especially noticeable that public interest in exhibitions and demonstrations has increased greatly during the past year.

The University will be host at the Annual Meeting of the Maritime Art Association at the beginning of June.

CHARLOTTETOWN

Miss Grace Campbell, Secretary of the Art Society of Prince Edward Island, reports that the Society has had an interesting and successful season under the direction of the president, Mr. H. W. Dick. A special study of the work of certain British and American artists and of art in Canada constituted the program for the year.

PRAIRIE PROVINCES

WINNIPEG

WINNIPEG ART GALLERY ASSOCIATION

"Masterpieces in Colour," an exhibit of large reproductions of pictures by modern masters, was an extra attraction at the Art Gallery during April. Failing the opportunity to see the famous originals, visitors obtained a good idea of them from these splendid prints. The Canadian, American and Mexican Schools were well represented along with the French and European moderns. Names such as Rivera, Picasso, Renoir, van Gogh, Gauguin, Cezanne, Matisse, Sloan, Burchfield, Benton and others give an indication of the completeness of the collection, which was lent by the University of Manitoba.

Another exhibition which brought numbers to the Gallery was a four man show by N. Brett, C. F. Ashmore, J. G. McGregor and P. J. Edgar. The fine pencil drawings and boldly handled pastels of Mr. Edgar showed an admirable sincerity. Mr. Ashmore approached his landscape and city subjects mostly from a decorative viewpoint, the water colour being happily used in simple

In the Harris Memorial Gallery three exhibitions were shown. The first was of paintings by a group of local artists and the second of silk screen prints from the National Gallery. Both attracted hundreds of visitors. The Society met in the Gallery for discussion of the prints when a demonstration of poster making by the silk screen process was given. School children's work, which covered a wide range of subject and showed a great deal of originality, formed the third exhibition. This was sponsored by the Society for the purpose of creating in the children of Charlottetown an interest in drawing and art. It was such an outstanding success that it has been decided to make the exhibition an annual event.

patches. The work of Mr. Brett enhanced the show with its rich colour and realistic expression. Mr. McGregor's oils and water colours of Winnipeg and the West perhaps lacked the depth of colour that seemed to be needed to represent such scenes.

During May a National Gallery of Canada travelling exhibition, arranged in co-operation with the Wartime Information Board, was on the walls and aroused keen interest. It consisted of photographs by the National Film Board dealing with Canada's contribution to victory by the workers behind the armed forces.

A selection of students' work from the Winnipeg School of Art, studies in colour and black and white, excellent drawings from life, and pattern designs, gave the public a good record of the course of study provided for the future artist.

An event of unusual importance took place in the Gallery when ten paintings by Canadian artists were presented to Dr. Warriner, Chairman of the School Board, to be placed in the public schools. Members of the City Council, the School

Board, and prominent citizens attended. The project, inaugurated by the Manitoba Region of the Federation of Canadian Artists is sponsored by the Board of Trade in collaboration with business firms. Each year further pictures will be donated until every school has received one.

A.J.M.

THE WINNIPEG SKETCH CLUB

The Winnipeg Sketch Club is now well launched on the thirtieth consecutive year of its existence. It was intended in the first place as a subsidiary of the School of Art, to enable the student to continue working when he was, so to speak, "on his own." After a short time outside artists were also admitted. A president and slate of officers were now considered necessary and a constitution was drawn up.

The Club has had some hard times and on more than one occasion it was almost considered advisable for it to close down, but fortunately this has never happened. Due to several years of intelligent leadership it is now firmly and definitely established. The members form a good cross-section of western Canadian society, both as regards to age, which ranges from about seventeen to seventy, and to nationality.

Twenty-seven years ago the Club held its first annual exhibition, an exceedingly modest affair compared with the excellent show of last December which attracted very large crowds. The work drew much favourable comment, especially the sketches actually done at the Club meetings. These had a spontaneity, a freshness and a naivete which was most pleasing.

FLORENCE WARREN.

REGINA

Considerable interest was shown in the exhibition of Canadian Children's Art, which was sponsored by the Regina Regional Group of the Federation of Canadian Artists. It was felt that this exhibition, sent out by the National Gallery, would do much towards bring-

ing about creative art in the schools.

Other exhibitions have included a one man show by Mrs. G. Kenderdine at Government House for the benefit of the Red Cross, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and the display of crafts and fine arts by members of the Saskatchewan Women's Art Association. Recently Handicraft House held an exhibition of the year's work, in which the children's art was most prominent.

Increased membership in the Sketch Club has made it necessary to meet three nights a week instead of two. There are now several classes, one for those in the services, one for portraiture, and one for costume and fashion drawing.

Miss Wynona Mulcaster, Art Instructor at the Regina Normal School, has returned from a three week's tour of small towns in southern Saskatchewan, during which she spoke to students and teachers on modern methods of art education.

The Federation Group of Regina is at present making arrangements for a jury show in the fall to which western artists will be invited to submit work.

SASKATOON

By far the most important news to come from Saskatoon in a long while has been the founding of the Saskatoon Art Centre on May 8th. It was officially opened by His Worship Mayor Angus W. Macpherson, one of the foremost movers in the project, who congratulated and thanked all concerned. This great step forward has been accomplished by the work of the Saskatoon Art Association, the Saskatoon Camera Club and the Archaeological Society of Saskatoon who some little time ago approached the City Council for an annual grant to secure common central quarters. This request was recently granted by the unanimous vote of the city fathers.

The Art Centre is to be incorporated with six directors, a bonded treasurer, a secretary nominated from the membership at large, and as soon as finances



Saskatoon Art Centre. Part of gallery during preview of opening, May 6, 1944. Doors in left and centre background lead respectively to archaeological display and art studio.

permit a permanent supervisor is to be appointed. The premises, which are fire-proof, with a large vault for the safe storage of exhibition material, consist of the whole of the first floor of the Standard Trust Building in the centre of the downtown section of the city. They include a fairly spacious exhibition and lecture hall, a studio for Art Association members, another for the Camera Club, and a room for archaeological displays.

The primary aim of the Art Centre is to make available to the public as many cultural services as possible, with the hope that it may become the nucleus of a civic centre. Plans include a continuous program of exhibitions, each member society to arrange its own exhibitions with a general committee to co-ordinate dates; series of lectures; studio facilities open to active members at all times; and the recommencement of the children's Saturday morning classes.

The Western Exhibition Circuit, pro-

posed by Lawren Harris, which it is hoped will be in operation by this fall, will be given full support, so that all exhibitions which pass through this province may be shown to the public of Saskatoon. The directorate feels strongly that having secured the support of the city it is important to offer citizens and visitors an uninterrupted flow of interesting exhibitions. The Art Centre also intends, with the co-operation of the Little Theatre and musical groups, to assist in the planning and erection of the proposed civic centre in the post war period.

Among recent exhibitions in Saskatoon have been water colours by Goodridge Roberts, drawings of war industries by Louis Muhlstock, and, on the occasion of the opening of the Art Centre, the 8th Annual Spring Exhibition of the Saskatoon Art Association, the Spring Exhibition of the Camera Club and the Vigfusson Archaeological Collection of material excavated in Saskatchewan.

EDMONTON, CALGARY

AND ELSEWHERE

This is the season for the exhibitions of the various art societies in Edmonton. In April the Edmonton Art Club held its 23rd annual exhibition. It was well hung and from a technical standpoint the work was good. Notable among the portraits was one by Dr. E. R. Pope of the late Dr. R. B. Wells, first President of the Edmonton Museum of Arts.

Next came exhibitions by the Senior Art Club and the children's Saturday morning classes. The children showed much lively and imaginative work in great contrast to the senior group, which would gain much from a more spontaneous approach. The Art Students' Club also showed some of its work, and the University Club, a group under the direction of H. G. Glyde of Calgary, held its first exhibition early in May.

Recently the Lions Club of Edmonton offered a \$300 scholarship to enable an outstanding student to attend the Art School of the Institute of Technology and Art in Calgary. It was won by Elva Pearson of the Junior Art Club. This is apparently the first important art scholarship to be given in this city and it is hoped that it may be the beginning of many more.

Walter J. Phillips, R.C.A., was the special guest and speaker on Members' Night at the Museum in April. A group of his water colours and block prints were on exhibition. Mr. Phillips gave an interesting account of the development of water colour, describing his own methods of painting. Afterwards he demonstrated how block prints are made.

Invitations have gone to six western centres to send a delegate to Edmonton for June 3rd for the purpose of discussing a Western Circuit for art exhibitions. The need for the establishment of such a circuit has been felt for some time. The results of this conference will be given later.

Members of the Edmonton Regional District of the Federation of Canadian

Artists have debated the plan suggested by Lawren Harris for the extension of the National Gallery and are in accord with it in substance. The following is taken from the text of their findings: "We agree that the National Gallery of Canada should distribute its knowledge, its treasures and its sympathies throughout the Dominion. We Federation members know that art, in its broadest sense, should be a part of the life of every citizen. The question is how to bring art to the people—not the people to art."

On July 26th the Banff School of Fine Arts will open for one month's session under the direction of Donald Cameron, head of the department of Extension of the University. Dr. A. Y. Jackson, with W. J. Phillips and H. G. Glyde, will again have charge of the painting section.

The Community School at Lethbridge will also open a short session on June 5th. It is largely owing to the vision and enthusiasm of Mr. Cameron that the development of this regional school has been made possible. May we have more of these schools—truly community art schools.

In May the Provincial Institute of Technology and Art had its annual students' exhibition, bringing to an end a very successful year.

There have also been during the season several other activities of which only brief mention can be made, such as the meetings of the Calgary group of the Alberta Society of Art and the Calgary Sketch Club, the Calgary Division of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, the Canadian Legion craft classes for the C.W.A.C.

Throughout the year the Calgary Art Association has arranged a series of exhibitions. These have been practically continuous since last September and have made it possible for students and public to see the work of Canadian painters. For the first time the Institute of Art and Design has been an "art centre" in its real sense.

R. W. HEDLEY AND H. G. GLYDE.



J. L. SHADBOLT. One of a series of murals in the United Services Centre, Vancouver.
For comment see *Canadian Art*, April-May, 1944, page 170.

WEST COAST

VANCOUVER

THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

Several exhibitions have been shown here recently.

Alistair Bell and Betty Streatfield Bell: A husband-and-wife show by two artists genuinely interested in drawing. Each strives to reduce the visual image to its essential significance by the use of line and added tone. Unity in the silhouette is generally achieved but not always in the component parts of the figure forms.

J. F. Plaskett: An imaginative painter with a strong sense of design and colour. Working in body-colour he forces an intensity by simplification of form and tone. His work in landscape, figure, and abstract pattern all carry a theatrical back-drop mood—with the players off-stage. Colour is used arbitrarily.

Kitchener and Waterloo Art Society: A worthy show. Almost European in its pastoral quality, this exhibition brought a more cultivated landscape to our western eyes than the one to which we are normally accustomed. The members of

the society paint easily and without strain, but the reach might well be greater. The work is more reminiscent than forward-reaching. Even where the painting is broad in handling the mood is placid. Considerable thought has been given to framing and with commendable results. Seldom has a more uniformly well-framed show visited the West.

34th Annual Exhibition of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts: An article might be written on the difference between the 34th Exhibition of the B.C. Society of Fine Arts, now showing at the Gallery, and the first exhibition of the Society seen by the writer in 1914. The contrast is considerable: in the 1914 exhibition the traditions of 19th century British painting were dominant; in the present show 20th century world influences are everywhere evident. The local (or should one say Canadian) obsession with landscape as subject matter continues, a landscape that has shaken itself of its vapours and insists on showing its bones in strong pattern and colour. Looking back to 1914 again, one can say

in comparison that the 1944 show is better painted and better designed, but not necessarily more sensitive on that account. A lot has been learned in the intervening period, and the present show is fresh and confident. Three works in the exhibition come sharply to the eye: *Abstraction* by Lawren Harris, *Gravel Mill* by J. L. Shadbolt, and *Two Girls* by Jane Billaux. The last named painting is a rich and joyous piece of work.



H. Faulkner Smith School of Applied and Fine Arts

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SESSION 1944-1945

Commencing September 5th

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MARINE BLDG. VANCOUVER, B.C.

FINE AND INDUSTRIAL ART



VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF ART

PROSPECTUS FREE ON APPLICATION

Saturday Morning Art Classes: Two exhibitions of child art were held in the city recently, one at the Vancouver School of Art and the other at the Art Gallery. In both exhibitions there was visual proof of the child-artist who knows no fear and has no inhibitions. Child art cannot be analysed, it has to be enjoyed. It can bear witness to over-teaching, in which case the child quality is destroyed, or it can show sympathetic guidance and encouragement on the part of the teacher. Instructing children in art is a difficult problem, and the problem is not solved by leaving the youngsters to their own resources. Both children and art have to be understood by the teacher. These classes obviously interest many children—close to 500 boys and girls attended the two classes—and the working enthusiasm of the Art School and Art Gallery groups suggests that the desired understanding between pupil and teacher has been reached.

13th Annual Meeting of the Art Gallery: The President of The Vancouver Art Gallery, Mr. W. H. Malkin, at the 13th Annual Meeting of the Gallery Association, submitted a cheering report. 68,507 visitors passed the turnstile during the year, an increase over the past year of 25%. Membership showed an increase of 115 over the previous year; revenues were up, the City grant was slightly up and, of course, the expenditures were up.

Altogether it was an up-and-coming year, testifying to the excellent work of the various committee members and of the staff. Full community service was given on a very small income, a service made possible only through much voluntary work by many unselfish members of the association. Special tribute was paid to the work done by the Chairman of the Ladies Auxiliary, Mrs. J. P. Fell, and her co-workers, Mrs. E. E. Buckerfield, Miss Helen Darling and Mrs. James McGeer. The President spoke also of the necessity for an extension of the Gallery, expressing the hope that it would take place soon after the war.

C.H.S.

THE MODERN "ISMS"

Continued from page 198

the design of the Picasso constitutes practically the entire work, that of the Rubens serves as the foundation for a superstructure rising through various types of human interest to a sublime religious conception symbolizing the unfathomable laws of human destiny. Since the Rubens lacks no essential element which the Picasso possesses, and includes additional elements absent from the Picasso, it must be judged the richer and more rounded work of art—or so at any rate it seems to the writer.*

It is true, as indicated by our reference to science, that cubist designs can suggest meanings more specific than the general feeling of modernity. In that respect they may have a dimension equivalent to the human appeal and religious symbolism of our Rubens. But they can suggest meanings only in a vague, indefinite way. If the artist wishes to emphasize and clarify his meaning-dimensions, he must introduce more definite elements of subject-matter.

In short, cubism, in the hands of its inventors, was a genuine and timely form of art, but also a limited form of art. It forced one particular type of effect to its logical conclusion, and in so doing excluded other and equally significant ones. Such concentration is good discipline for an artist for a certain length of time, just as playing scales is good discipline for a musician. Cubism has rendered valuable service in helping to make the modern world design-conscious. Its constructive influence can be seen today in decorative and commercial art, and in many other spheres. But its range is narrow. Were the modern world in general, or any individual artist in particular, to paint *nothing* but cubistic pictures, the psychological result would soon be a repression of other phases of artistic impulse. Hence Picasso and the original cubists worked in the cubist style only long enough to explore its possibilities and profit by the benefits which it conferred. In their subsequent

*For a detailed study of relative "amplitudes" in art forms, see the author's book, *Representation and Form* (Scribners, 1936).

work they either turned to other isms which enabled them to exploit other aspects of vision, or they returned to a more inclusive style which could not be classified among the isms.

It would be impossible within the scope of one article to discuss all the modern isms individually. The general conclusions which we have reached regarding cubism can be extended to include the other isms as well. Each is an appropriately modern form of art with some specific type of artistic significance to its credit, but with a range narrowed by concentration upon that particular type of significance.

S. A. Callaghan's *News Camera* on page 184 illustrates the way in which surrealism exploits the realm of fantasy. By making the camera into a strange, many-eyed creature, by turning its beams like search lights in all directions, the artist cleverly conveys an impression of the omnipresent activity of the news photographer. The receptive observer cannot but feel a certain fascination in such work, but he may also feel that it is artificially overbalanced on the side of irrationality.

The answer to our original question thus turns out to involve elements both for and against isms. They may be said to embody "beauty and truth" in that they are creatively vital forms of modern art and that they are capable, respectively, of achieving definite values of design or meaning. None of them is inclusive enough to embody the maximum range of both design *and* meaning. This lack of breadth would seem to prevent them from being accepted as the final or the total fulfilment of the artistic impulse of the modern world. To that degree they are "blind alleys." Equally modern but more inclusive forms of art appear to hold the chief promise for the future.

Having published two articles in the present series on the understanding of art, Canadian Art invites the reactions of its readers. If you would like to have the series continued in future issues, or wish to propose subjects for discussion, please send your suggestions to the Editor, Canadian Art, Box 384, Ottawa.

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**RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH
THE ARTS**

Continued from page 186

bution of films, co-ordination can be established between the National Film Board and the National Film Society.

3. *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.* The CBC would plan and schedule all kinds of concerts, lectures, etc., for tours to local centres. A special staff within the Corporation would be essential for this purpose. It has been estimated that if there were 90 communities across Canada where concerts could be given rental free, it would be possible to cover other expenses by selling tickets at 25 cents each or less.

It is recommended that the government provide a grant to carry out the necessary survey implied in the art centre plan. \$25,000 is suggested for this survey.

OTHER PROPOSALS

Two other proposals will be submitted to the Reconstruction Committee with this plan. One is for a government committee on cultural affairs. The other will include the results of the sifting and co-ordination of many ideas for Canadian cultural progress submitted by a number of national art societies and by individual musicians, artists, architects and writers. Consideration will be given to Mr. Corriveau's objectives as outlined in the *Canadian Review of Music and Art* and to recommendations which have appeared in *Canadian Art*, such as Elizabeth Wyn Wood's thoughtful "National Program for the Arts in Canada" and L.A.C. Panton's "The Academy and the Future of Art in Canada."

These three proposals are in reality three facets of one all-inclusive idea which, if put into practice, can do more than anything else to unite our people and make Canada a vital factor in an enlightened world organization.

SILK SCREEN EXPERIMENT

Continued from page 190

"But the effort is more than rewarded by the result. I can imagine that an artist would soon come to think in terms of the medium from the initial conception of the design to the finished print. Much experiment and hard work will need to be done before we can issue prints which are technically up to the standard set by the American exhibition now touring Canada, but a start has been made and already many artists are getting busy with silk and crayon, fortified with plenty of paint-rags, old smocks and, most necessary of all, hand cleaner. There is a great opportunity here for the Canadian artist to produce reasonably priced prints marked with his own style and individual character."

NEW BOOKS ON ART

THE NATIONAL BALLET. By *Arnold L. Haskell.* Toronto: Macmillan. \$3.50.

Haskell writes this book in his usual popular style, yet do not be mistaken, this is not an elementary study by any means. It bears particular reference, not to the ballet as a whole, but to one special school. Those who have had the fortune to attend performances of the Vic-Wells Ballet at Sadler's Wells Theatre in London before the war, will be delighted to read how this company, which Ninette de Valois founded, has survived the hardships of blitz and blackout and is now well on its way towards becoming the "National Ballet" of England.

Other Canadians who have not seen this company in action, will be more interested perhaps in the various references Haskell makes to the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and similar travelling groups. He states rightly that these international companies have been weakened in recent years through lack of a permanent home. On the other hand, the ballet in England, possessing its own school, surrounded by its own permanent circle of earnest teachers, enthusiastic painters and musicians, is showing every evidence of vigour and growth. Its choreography is fresh, its costumes and designs new and original.

All the same, the Russian companies are still the great reservoirs of tradition and experience. It is their example and inspiration which has stimulated the growth of native schools in both England and the United States.

What of the smaller nations, such as Canada? Haskell, who has visited Australia, feels that given peaceful conditions, an Australian company (there is one already in existence) will flourish greatly. Some of the painters of that country have tried their hand at stage designs. Also Australia has produced one great dancer, Helpmann. Although Haskell doesn't mention us, we Canadians aren't doing too badly either. We have teachers of talent and experience in our midst, and the nucleus of ballet groups in Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

National ballet began in England, when Diaghileff, after the last war recruited new stars for his company from young English students. The now famous Markova was one of these. Possible parallels can be seen today in Canada. Denisova, her Canadian name was Myers, was a "young star" at Covent Garden, London, in 1939. She had been trained as a dancer in Vancouver. Ian Gibson, who is today a prominent member of the Ballet Theatre in New York, also came from this same school in Vancouver. Why should Canada not hope to have its own "National Ballet," too, in the future?

DONALD BUCHANAN.



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BOOKS RECEIVED

CANADIAN ART: 1820-1940. By William Col. 278 pp. Toronto: Ryerson Press. \$5. A history of Canadian painting. Inclusive but diffuse with regard to the past; conservative in point of view; unsympathetic to the modern phases of Canadian art.

A CORNER STONE OF CANADIAN CULTURE. By Alice Ravenhill. 103 pp.; 20 plates. Provincial Museum, Victoria, B.C. 50c. A valuable and fine illustrated outline of the arts and crafts of Indian tribes of British Columbia.

SAINTES ARTISANES; I, LES BRODEUSES. By Marius Barbeau. 113 pp.; 20 plates. Montreal: Editions Fides. An account, in French, of early French Canadian embroidery, throwing much light on an important period in the history of Canadian art.

MODERN DRAWINGS. Edited by Morton Wheeler. 86 plates accompanied by an introductory essay, catalogue, and bibliography. New York: Museum of Modern Art. \$2.25. An international survey of modern drawing as shown in the recent exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, beginning with Cezanne and including the best known draughtsmen of the present day.

ALEXANDER CALDER. By James John Sweeney. 67 pp. New York: Museum of Modern Art. \$2. An illustrated biographical and critical study of the modern American artist who is best known for his suspended wire and sheet metal constructions known as "mobiles."

AN APOLOGY

We regret that circumstances have interfered with the publication of four of the articles announced in our previous issues. Difficulty in securing suitable illustrations made it necessary to cancel plans for *Wood in the House of Tomorrow* by Fred Lassett. Other complications prevented the appearance of *Sculpture and the People* by Florence Wyle, *Personality of the Artist* by Dr. M. Prados, and *Henri Masson* by E. R. Hunter. We trust that some of these articles may be available for publication at a later time.

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CONTRIBUTORS

or to entering the R.C.A.F., **Charles Goldhamer** instructor in drawing and painting at the Central Technical School in Toronto. He is a past president of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, a member of the Ontario Society of Artists and Canadian Society of Graphic Art. Mr. Goldhamer's work is represented in Hart House, the Art Gallery of Toronto, and in other collections.

For the past 20 years **Lawren Harris** has been a head of Canadian cultural progress. He was one of the original members of the Group of Seven, and the first president of the Canadian Group of Painters. He was largely responsible for the erection of the Studio Building in Toronto. He has taken an active part in developing the Federation of Canadian Artists and was recently elected its president. His final plan for art centres is the most important proposal now before the Canadian art world. Mr. Harris lives in Vancouver.

Arthur Frye is Assistant Professor of English Literature at Victoria College, University of Toronto. His previous writings, published in the *Canadian Art* and elsewhere, have chiefly dealt with other subjects than art. We trust that he will continue his best known work in art criticism, a neglected field of Canadian arts.

John Toles, of Toronto, studied at the Ontario College of Art. Mr. Toles is now a free-lance photographer specializing in story and industrial photography.

Jeannor Barteaux, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario and of the University of Toronto Library School, is librarian at the Carnegie Public Library in Windsor, Ont. Miss Barteaux is particularly interested in Canadian arts and crafts. She was one of the organizers of the Windsor Handicrafts Guild which this year conducted classes in bookbinding, weaving, and modelling.

COMING ISSUES

The next issue of *Canadian Art* is not scheduled to appear until October, specific announcements regarding contents will be made later. Plans under consideration include a study of mural painting in Canada, and various phases of art and craft in relation to postwar reconstruction.

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